

Pers 2 Eugene J. MCCARTHY



McCarthy for VP?

Washington. The immutable fact that President Johnson will cast the one, deciding vote for his running mate in Atlantic City in August has done nothing to stop the furious speculation in Democratic circles as to who the second man on the ticket could and should be.

The choice is considered crucial because Johnson comes from a part of the country that has never before sent a man to the White House. And it is considered essential that he find someone who balances his rather flamboyant Texas qualities, which are regarded as exotic in the Northeastern and other large states.

John F. Kennedy made "style" a fighting word in the political lexicon.

While President Johnson has been unequivocally and increasingly committed on the central issue of civil rights, he is still a dubious quantity among those liberal, intellectual and Irish branches of the party who fought his nomination for the Vice Presidency in 1960.

He may not know until after the Republican convention in July exactly what he will need in the way of a running mate. Meanwhile, Washington is awash in possibilities and probabilities. The talk centers around five men: the late President's brother, Attorney General Kennedy; his brother-in-law, Peace Corps Director R. Sargent Shriver; UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, who was twice the Democratic nominee for the Presidency; Senate Whip Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, and Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy of the same state.

The presence of the Attorney General on the ticket—and it is argued that he could not refuse to do for Johnson what Johnson did for his brother—would lock up the Kennedy vote and insure the presence of the superlative Kennedy organization in the campaign.

Shriver's nomination would also summon the Kennedy forces.

Of them all, only Sen. McCarthy, a handsome, relaxed 47-year-old intellectual, has received a public endorsement. Rep. Celler (D-N. Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, on television two weeks ago pronounced his former

House colleague "the best Vice Presidential candidate, and the strongest."

"He is," said Celler, a scholarly gentleman, erudite and a real orator, who has carved out a remarkable career in the Senate. Like Robert Kennedy and Shriver, McCarthy is a Catholic, and this is considered an asset. The fact would have been one of sardonic amusement to the late President, who up until the moment of his election was told that his religion was an insuperable obstacle to the White House. Now, all is changed.

Sen. McCarthy is popular both among Catholics and liberals, who salute his independence. With President Kennedy, although on different grounds, he opposed federal aid for parochial schools.

He has been identified with the progressive elements in the church represented by Pope John XXIII.

Liberals remember gratefully his radio debate with the other Sen. McCarthy—the Red-hunter Joseph of Wisconsin—at the height of the furor when practically no one in the Congress would take him on.

His friends point out that his wit, reflectiveness and detachment would provide an effective contrast to the Johnson manner.

He and Johnson enjoy a cordial relationship. The President was McCarthy's second choice in 1960. He was a Stevenson man, who breasted the Kennedy tide with a rousing speech nominating Stevenson that was the oratorical high-water mark of the Democratic convention.

Since then, he has spoken in almost every state in the union.

One local observer pointed out that Sen. McCarthy is an Irish Catholic without the built-in advantages of the breed, namely a big city base. His home is in St. Paul, not a political powerhouse.

But his partisans insist that if the matter were put up to the members of the House, who must run this year, and Senators up for reelection, he would be the first choice.

And if Lyndon Johnson turns to his old stamping ground, Congress, for a running mate, Sen. McCarthy might well be the man.